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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3700
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC 8292
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5572
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 9374
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 0443
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UNCLAS SEOUL 000454

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SEOUL - MEDIA REACTION

North Korea

"Calamity of Full Participation in PSI"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized (03/23): "By the looks of it, the Lee Administration pulled full participation in PSI out of its bag of tricks to demonstrate that it will not let North Korea's 'bad behavior' go without a response. However, it is quite probable the move will only exacerbate problems and deliver no benefits... The Obama Administration is not even finished reviewing U.S. policy towards North Korea, let alone its leadership of PSI. But as seen through the U.S.'s recent changes in policy towards Iran, it is quite likely policy towards North Korea could turn towards dialogue, regardless of whether the North fires a missile. If the Lee Administration gets ahead of itself, it could exacerbate the 'isolation of South Korea' and the North's approach of 'closing up to the South and opening up to the Americans' (tong mi bong nam)."

"This Is Not the Time to Talk About PSI Participation"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized (03/23): "The ROK's full participation in the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) could further strain inter-Korean relations... If North Korea pushes ahead with a missile launch despite stern warnings from the international community, it certainly should pay for what it does. But it is not wise for the ROKG to decide to participate fully in the PSI, going beyond countermeasures (authorized) by the U.N."

Detained U.S. journalists

"Detention of U.S. Reporters Should Serve As an Opportunity to Resolve U.S.-North Korea Relations"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized (03/21): "If this incident (the detention of U.S. journalists) is successfully resolved, it could lead to a breakthrough in U.S.-North Korean relations and improve the image of the North, not only in the U.S. but also in the international community. If trust is built this way, it will be easy to manage tension after the North's launch of the Kwangmyongsong-2 satellite, and it will also lead to the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks and the normalization of diplomatic ties between the U.S. and North Korea. We hope that the

North will not miss this golden opportunity."

STEPHENS